THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH'S DUTY TO THE FREEDMEN.

A SERMON

PREACHED ON

THANKSGIVING DAY, DECEMBER 7, 1865,

IN

CHRIST CHURCH, READING, PA.

BY

REV. ALEXANDER G. CUMMINS, M.A.

PHILADELPHIA:
SHERMAN & CO., PRINTERS.
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CORRESPONDENCE.

READING, Dec. 16, 1865.

REVEREND AND DEAR SIR:

We, members of your Church, having heard your Sermon preached on Thanksgiving Day (Dec. 7), on the "Christian Church's Duty to the Freedmen," and believing its teaching to be beneficial, and that its influence should be felt more widely than your immediate pulpit circle, most respectfully request a copy of the same for publication.

With assurances of regard,

We are very truly yours,

D. E. STOUT, ESQ.,
G. A. NICOLLS, ESQ.,
ISAAC ECKERT, ESQ.,
J. L. SLICHLER, ESQ.,
BEVERLEY R. KEIM, ESQ.,
SAMUEL J. POTTS, ESQ.,
HON. J. P. JONES.

To Rev. ALEX. G. CUMMINS, Reading.

GENTLEMEN:

I do not feel at liberty to refuse your request of a copy of my Sermon preached on Thanksgiving Day. The manuscript is at your disposal.

Sincerely yours,

ALEXANDER G. CUMMINS.

CHRIST CHURCH RECTORY,
Dec. 18, 1865.

To DAVID E. STOUT, ESQ., and others.

SERMON.

Psalm 107 : 14, 15.

He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death, and brake their bands in sunder.

Oh! that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men.

This is the day of thanksgivings to God for His mercies and blessings, which have crowned the past year. Thanksgivings from the heart, at once solemn and jubilant; thanksgivings, both individual and national; thanksgivings by Church and by State. As a people, we recognize God as the Supreme Ruler of our nation, when, at the call of its Chief Magistrate, we assemble together to give thanks and praise the Lord. The nation bends before God, to-day, as a Christian nation. This Thanksgiving Day surpasses all others in our national history, for the number and richness of the divine blessings which it signalizes. Ah! who, indeed, can tell, as it should be told, in one short

hour, the full, precious story of the "goodness of the Lord and His wonderful works to the children of men" in this land? The past year is crowded with the tokens of His goodness. He seems to have opened the heavens and showered down blessings. You need not to have them recounted. They are fresh in your memory. They came, unexpectedly and swiftly, like an angel's visit; but they are permanently with us. We are enjoying their fruits, and continue to marvel every day at the good doings of our God. In the past, long gone by, we rejoiced at this season to thank our Heavenly Father for the "early and the latter rain;" for abundant harvests; for "barns filled with plenty, and presses bursting out with new wine;" for general health and prosperity; for freedom from famine and pestilence; for peaceful and profitable relations with foreign nations: in short, for that public soundness and safety in which every man "dwelt under his vine and under his fig-tree." We then rejoiced in the goodness of God, and esteemed it worthy of our highest praise. But what was that record of mercies, compared with our late one? Truly, God was but preparing us for greater displays of His good-will! The time came for God to hide His dealings from us for a little while. The dream of our internal peace was broken! Peace suddenly vanished, as a night-vision. The nation, like a man suddenly

aroused from sleep, rubbed its eyes, and found grim-visaged War staring, with bloody, uplifted arm, right before its capital. I do not care to review the stealthy steps of the assassins who approached the nation's couch of peace—who awoke her with a stab, and for four years aimed at and missed her heart. I do not care to call up memories of the nation's sighs, and tears, and groans, whilst we were plunged into that furnace, which was seven-times heated by fraternal hatred and revenge. There is not time for this; nor is there time or disposition for a review of the battles on which seemed to hang the destiny of a great empire; with those streams of blood which, flowing through many States, threatened so often to deluge the whole land. We have not forgotten it all: we have it yet before us, as too solemn, too awful, a reality. We would wish to blot it out from history and from memory. We remember it, from the first shot aimed at Sumter to the organization of large forces of troops, and the march and meeting of large armies, from which the farmers fled in dismay, like those in the days of Horatius, when

> "Troops of sunburned husbandmen,
> With reaping-hooks and staves,
> And droves of mules and asses,
> Laden with skins of wine,
> And endless flocks of goats and sheep,
> And endless herds of kine,

And endless trains of wagons,
That creaked beneath the weight
Of corn-sacks and of household goods,
Choked every roaring gate."

We remember it, from the disaster at the first Bull Run—with its consequent depression of spirits to Northern patriots, its wide-spread fear that the capital was lost—and through the gloom which settled down like a thick cloud during that invasion of our Commonwealth which ended in the Battle of Gettysburg, and so on down to the triumphs of Sherman and Grant—to the hour when Richmond opened her gates to the hero of the North. I do not forget how the nation was humbled to a conscientious sense of dependence upon God; how the fasts were observed; how the solemn prayers went up, all over the land, to the Almighty's throne; how one year after another opened with hope, and closed with almost despair; until, after four years of internal war, God caused slaughter suddenly to cease, and the sun of peace had risen while the people thought the night of war was not fully spent. I said that I did not care to call up memories of our sore struggle. No! we are in the daylight of our peace. Thank God for this! We have passed through the furnace of affliction, and we live as a nation. "Let the people praise thee, O God!" for this. Streams of fraternal blood have ceased

to flow; we are a united, a whole nation; our country is restored and saved; life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, are once more secured to every citizen. God hath saved our country. "Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord." I cannot enumerate all the wonderful works of God to us in the past year. As our hearts overflow with thankfulness, let me go to my theme.

"He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death, and brake their bands in sunder." Here is the work to which our special attention is directed. The bonds of four millions of slaves have been broken by the war. Will they believe that this is not God's work in their behalf? Are we prepared to say that it is not? I have a preliminary word or two to say here. The consideration of this subject by the Church, against which so many Christians were prejudiced, a few years ago, on the ground of keeping politics out of the pulpit, is now commended to the ministers and their congregations by the Episcopal Church, through the action of her late General Convention. What is commended? The religious, moral, intellectual, and physical condition of those persons of color, whose chains have lately been stricken from them. How was it commended? By the unanimous vote of the late General Convention. It therefore comes

to us for consideration from our greatest Church Council—from the highest authority in the Church.

But see. This whole question comes in another form. It has changed relations; indeed, the question itself is changed. It is no longer a discussion on slavery, which, so long as it was regulated by general or local law, and entered into the creeds of political parties, was objected to by many as a firebrand thrown from the pulpit. It is not of slaves that we are to speak. It is not to discuss whether slavery be a sin. Those old political issues are blown away by the hot breath of war. With the violent uprooting of slavery, all political questions connected with it were torn away also. Its destruction is about accomplished. It is numbered with the things that have no life, and its carcass is buried low in the grave of extinct political issues. With the constitutional amendment for a living fact, it will be madness for party to dig away the earth that covers its grave, or to hope for its political resurrection. I say slavery is dead and buried: we have nothing to do with it. But out of its death springs a new life, which is felt, because it jostles the life of the nation. It characterizes four millions of human beings, who to the Government and to the people stand in a widely different and new relation —as different as freedom is from slavery. They are freedmen. We have to deal with this new life;

with this new relation; with four millions of human beings who are free. This is a very different question from the old one. So long as that race were under bondage by law, and under the protection of those who provided food and raiment, we might possibly have been excused for appearing indifferent, because they had the necessaries of life—they could live. But now, with their bonds broken, that disenthralled race stands at present in a position of utter poverty; homeless, almost naked, shivering with cold, and near starvation; ignorant, with no avenues for self-sustenance open; the sport of the cunning and the malicious; perishing by disease; bereft of mental, moral, and spiritual instruction, and thrown in every way upon the care and charity of a Christian people. Does not such a condition as this call for sympathy? *How to deal* with four millions of human beings so situated, is the question before us. Can prejudice rise up against a question like this, because it concerns a race whose color is unlike that of our race? Shall hunger, and nakedness, and disease, and starvation, and death, waste and destroy humanity by thousands and hundreds of thousands, because the face is *black*? Shall souls for whom Christ died, be denied the knowledge of His name, and the power and glory of His grace, because those souls beat and hope and leap in black bosoms? The Christian Church cries, with one

voice, *Away with such questions!* they are insulting to Christianity. Away with such prejudices! they belong to an age worse than infidel. There is not a Christian man in this land who can fail to feel sympathy for those poor beings.

How shall we deal with those four millions? This is the great and grave question before us. It is the great moral and social problem of the age. It is occupying the minds of the highest and the lowest in the land; the wisest, the noblest, and the best; the statesman, the philosopher, the philanthropist; yea, the whole Church and State. It is based upon both the grounds of religion and humanitarianism. These both respond at once, that the freedmen must be fed and clothed; allowed to work, and be paid for their labor; and instructed in secular and religious knowledge. That schools should be opened, into which they and their children shall be gathered, where they may learn how to take care of themselves, and be fitted to occupy that independent position, in society and in the State, which they have reached. That Churches and Sunday-schools must be built, into which they shall be assembled to hear the word of God, in order that here they may become peaceable and good citizens, and their souls prepared to rest in heaven hereafter. All this makes up a stupendous work to be done, and to be done speedily. Its magnitude can only

be appreciated by a knowledge of the wide-spread desolation in the South. All the agencies of an organized Christian charity, that shall be coextensive with the boundaries of every State in the Union, will be needed. The people are coming up to the work. They are pouring out their money for this object upon the altar of their country, reunited by war, as a thank-offering to God for the victories which He gave to hold us together. And though they were taxed and strained to support those who fought and offered their lives willingly until peace came to a nation saved by the Lord, they still give, and will give, out of the abundance of that gratitude to Him who has wrought such wonderful works for us; Who has lifted four millions of beings out of chains and dust into freedom and hope; Who "brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death, and brake their bands in sunder."

But this is not all of the grave question that we have to consider. We have touched but a part of it; a great part, but one not difficult of execution. It wants but will and work. Its path is clear; it runs in a simple, straight line of duty. But where does our duty begin and end? Is it simply to feed, clothe, and educate? And if this be all, for how long a time? Or, on the other hand, if that be not the whole, how much more is included in our Christian duty? Shall we leave out of view, as an unim-

portant thing, the relation of the freedmen to the Government and society? Or shall we aim to make them good and useful citizens? Shall we limit the influences of religion to the simple proclamation of the dying love of a Saviour, and put the Bible in their hands, to be read and used as if they were men fully grown in civilization and Christianity, and then bid them to obey the powers that be—to take their places respectably in society, and to work out their individual salvation in fear and trembling? Or shall religion and the Church go to them as a mass, striving to leaven that mass of humanity, so as to work out its highest and best destiny both for time and eternity? Shall religion and the Church go to them, as a race, just dragged out of darkness and uncivilized, requiring to be developed into the likeness of the civilization which surrounds them? Shall they be treated, by such God-given powers, just as they are, as babes in civilization and in Christianity, and needing to be nursed and brought on from one stage to another of development? Shall the Christian Church move forward as the great civilizer of races and nations, and aid the Government in the solution of this fearful problem? Or shall she stand back, fold her arms, and try to believe that such is not her duty? O! does not the condition of the Indians in our land, and their history here, answer these questions about the duty

of the Church? I think that the treatment of those red men gives us a sufficient answer. If we admit, then, that the Christian Church has a duty to perform in this respect, it is evident that its mode of performance, or the practical plans and operations to be adopted and followed, do certainly challenge the most serious reflection and the wisest judgment; for we find ourselves plunged at once into the vortex of many conflicting theories upon the different branches of the problem; and upon the proper settlement of each one of those branches may depend the solution of the whole question. We cannot go over all the ground that stretches out before us, but we can glance at its most prominent features.

The most natural and proper way is to look first at the present civil condition of the freedmen. They occupy a peculiar position. They are neither slaves, nor citizens by law. They are free, and yet not enjoying the most valued privileges of freemen. They are citizens to enjoy life and liberty, and yet not clothed with citizenship. They stand in a position midway between slavery and citizenship; at any rate, they are still at a point of transition. They are freedmen; and that word does really best describe their present civil condition. They have freedom; that is a large boon; and such freedom as they have, is now the question for moral and reli-

gious culture. They are *freed* men, before American society, the American Government, and before the world. In what is the *peculiarity* of their relation to the Government? Why, simply this: a race, untutored, ignorant, and poor, is suddenly brought out of bondage, and totally unfit to act, think, and provide for self: and therefore they fall naturally under the guardianship of the Government and the Christian Church. Is this a wrong conclusion? If a man is sick and poor, and cannot support himself, is it not the duty of the town or city to send him to the Poor-house? Has he not a right to go there? Is not the municipal corporation the guardian of the poor? Is there not a double obligation, both divine and moral, for society to care for its poor? Here, then, is the peculiarity of their relation. *Freedmanship*, if I may be allowed the use of the word, is a state of orphanage. Yes, freedmen are orphans to the Government, and the Church included in the Government. These are the patrons, the guardians, to do for them what the guardian-at-law may do for his ward. Will logic or common sense lead us to any other conclusion? If these four millions of beings were settled in homes, with home's blessings and comforts about them, and were contented and happy, and educated enough to provide for their families, and were of a white race, or, being black, had no jealousies or fears or antipa-

thies toward our race, then they might be left to themselves. But this is just what they are not, and that makes the difference. They come out of slavery, with most of slavery's faults and evils still clinging to their garments. They come, as a race of a different color, alongside of the Anglo-American race, having the feeling of caste and the fear of contact with the other race. So long taught to feel dependence, now quite unprepared to realize independence. You have to deal with not a *few* poor and shiftless individuals, but a *race* of men; four millions of degraded and ignorant men; of men whose eyes look out upon the dazzling light of liberty, and wonder what it means. If you push them off into some distant territory, in a body, as a race, to settle there, as has been done with the red race, you give them over to barbarism and heathenism; and in doing that, you would be attempting to escape the most solemn responsibility which the issue of the war of the rebellion has cast upon you, and which (who can doubt it?) God has brought to the very door of the nation! No; I say, for these reasons, and for more if you please, the duty begins right where they are; and the Government and the Church are their guardians, to take care of them, to train them, in the States where they have been born. In this respect, the freedmen of this country differ from the freedmen of Rome. After the manu-

mission of the Roman slave, there still remained a moral tie between the freedman and his late master. The latter was the patron of the former. The freedman remained in a sort of moral dependency on his former master. There was between them an obligation of reciprocal aid and support. There were two modes of emancipation: one limited in its effect, the other more general. The one gave a freedom to the slave that was good only as against his master; for this, the mere word or certificate of the master was sufficient. The other, which was the more regular method, was effected by the master's leading his slave by the hand before the prætor or consul, and declaring his object to give freedom. The prætor's wand then gave the slave a blow on his head, which conferred freedom and limited privileges of citizenship. There was no limitation of the right of manumission, which belonged to every proprietor, until Augustus imposed a tax upon it.[1] We are not concerned with the motive which dictated manumission. It may have been humanity, or pride in seeing a larger retinue of clients. Under the republic, the freedmen could obtain no political honors, and were subject to other political restrictions. In later times, some of these restrictions were removed; and during some reigns, the

[1] Merivale's History of the Romans, vol. iv, p. 308.

freedmen rose in influence and wealth, and some of them were held in intimacy by the Emperors.[1] But the point of comparison which I wish to make here between the Roman and the American freedmen, is this: that the relation of patron and client, in the case of the Roman freedmen, must subsist somewhere for our American freedmen. And as these latter owe their freedom, not to their late proprietors, but to the Government of the United States through the action of war, it follows that their moral tie of dependence is to the Government; and between the Government and the freedmen there is that relation of patron and client. And if this be so, why then we have grand moral duties springing out of that relation, which should not and cannot rightly be avoided. And if that colored race is to live independently in the centre of our civilization, then the growth of Christianity, the prevalence of peace and prosperity, the stability of our political institutions, the progress of our empire,—these and other like universal interests, one and all, press upon the American mind and conscience the great question of homogeneity in American civilization. I speak of civilization in its broad sense. American civilization, leaving out the colored race, has many homogeneous elements. The tendency of our legis-

[1] Ibid., vol. v, pp. 403–4–5.

lation has been to produce homogeneity. But a new element now appears in the midst of our civilization, either to be benefited by and work with it, or to conflict with it. The opposite of this proposition of civilization is to hold the freed colored race in precisely the position which they now occupy, socially and politically, which every reasoning man will frankly confess cannot safely be done. Education will go on, moral and religious training will go on. But if that could be done, no one will doubt that it would be attended with most undesirable, nay, fearful evils. The antipathy and the prejudice, which may be said to naturally exist between races differing in color, would be wonderfully stimulated, and grow with years into the strength of hostility, and finally break out into open war. A war of races would inevitably be the result, with all its horrors of pillage, massacre, and burnings, whose bloody drama would have for its last act the extermination of the weaker race. Is this result at all to be entertained by an enlightened Christian civilization, or by a humane and liberal Government? Humanity and religion both shudder at the thought! Our minds go back, then, straight to the theory of a homogeneous civilization.

I take civilization, as a word, in its broadest sense. The American is one of the broadest and best types of modern civilization. Contrast the

populations of Asia and Africa with ours, and see the difference; contrast the civilization of Spain with ours, and still the difference. Liberty and equality are not the whole of civilization. The American Indians have that among themselves—and who would call them civilized? Progress; onward march; development; such is the idea of civilization. Is this all? No. It is progress or development in two directions: in society and in the individual. Not the development of the one to the exclusion of the other. Not the merging of the individual in the State, so as to lose individual activity; nor the enlargement of individual activity, so as to enfeeble the organism of society. Neither the one nor the other, but both in due proportions, each acting upon the other harmoniously: society acting from its external, material means—that is, from without, upon the internal condition of man, compensating labor and securing its reward; the individual acting from within, from moral and intellectual power, outwardly upon society, elevating it for new trials and discoveries and hopes and conquests. The *proper relation of man to man*, in society, is the idea and essence of civilization. This is what Christianity takes hold of; and when it takes hold, it moulds and directs internally, until its planted sentiments grow into the body politic, and until its own image is stamped upon the face of

society. Here, on this broad field of humane work, the Christian Church plants herself. She is to grasp that *relation of man to man*, and to make it proper by making it Christian. She is to elevate society, not by interfering with its laws and customs, but by influencing the individual man in his relation to his neighbor; by forcing, through moral means, one to do justice to the other. She sees the black man standing by the white man; and to our question, Is the black person a human being? is he a man? she answers, Yes; that his color hides the powers and capacities of a man, as truly as he whose color is white, brown, or red; that he has a soul, as rational as ours, and as immortal as ours; that his whole moral, spiritual, and intellectual being is given of God, just as though his skin were white; that he is of the same flesh and blood with us, in the unity of the human race, springing from the same Adam and Eve whom we recognize as the first parents of mankind; placed by the Almighty Father on this earth to enjoy its beauty and its blessings in common with us; that Christ came to seek and to save him, and died for him, no less than for us; and that he is to enter the same heaven that is provided for us. Yes, he is a man!

Now, then, we come into a clearer light of duty. If he is a man, he must be dealt with *as* a man. His birthright is manhood, and whatever that car-

ries with it. If it is a depressed and sunken manhood, it must be elevated, educated, and refined. Christian men can make none but Christian principles and virtues encircle a fellow man. Therefore the process of individual development will be applied. Christian society will lend its most benign agencies to the work of arousing the man of color to a true and vivid sense of his individuality. It will teach him the idea of individual responsibility and individual activity. Mental and moral power will be applied to his mind and soul, in order that his mind and soul may radiate such power as far as possible. He will be taught that he has rights, both temporal and eternal. He will learn that there is a labor of head as well as of hand; and that labor and its rewards are not only for to-day, but for to-morrow also. From ideas given to him, he will develop ideas. There must be the feeling that he is not beyond the care of legislation; that the law throws protection around him and his property; that he is an object of interest and care to the State. And then, when his mind is trained to think for self and for others with self-reliance, and his soul to aspire for higher ranges of activity, he must have something tangible and material for his thoughts and aspirations to settle upon; something which may body forth his thoughts, and give them representation. To stop short of this would overturn

every advance made. For civilization is not merely education; nor is it merely mechanical labor, or the representation of labor. With ideas and thoughts, with activity and a sense of personal responsibility, follow hopes and longings for the acquisition of property, and for opportunities of using the skill, and knowledge, and power acquired. When a man once reaches the conviction that he is internally something more than he was, and puts a new and larger value on himself, and knows that his present self is a new and better development of his former self, he seeks for occasions to try himself, and to communicate to those around him the influences which wrought the change and the change also. This is natural; it is the nature of the human mind. It is the outworking of the soul, and the inherent activity and restlessness of ideas. Therefore we necessarily advance further. The man of color will be restless and unhappy if we stop here. He must have opportunities to acquire and hold property; he must be permitted to own land in fee simple; he must have open to him those businesses and professions in which his energies will enjoy full scope; he must have the chance of competition in all the divers trades and occupations. In a word, make him so far internally and externally a citizen. This will be to put him in a *proper relation* to the white man; and thus will our American civilization

be extended to the colored race. This is *equality of relation for individual development.* I indulge no little social theories here. It is not necessary to look to the private or domestic relations of the freedman in any community. Enable him to go into competition with our race is all that can be asked. Send him out, then, to stand or fall on his own merits. He will take that place in society which his own moral and intellectual merit and his own industry may secure. With such preparation, with such freedom of activity, and such individual equality, he will obtain just that social position which he deserves,—no greater, no less. The intercourse of society and all its arrangements are things which settle themselves. This, I repeat, will extend our American civilization to the four millions of freedmen. But what do we mean by making that civilization *homogeneous?* It is that the two races, white and black, distinct as they are in color, and distinct as they should continue in color, may have an equal and an undiscriminating legislation, both municipal and national. The motto of American legislation should be *diversity of color, but unity of civilization.*

The most rapid way to abolish prejudice against color is to provide equality of legislation. The attitude of one race to the other should be that of friendship, of sympathy; no feeling of caste; no

jealousy of race; no lines of distinction; no clashing of the *aristocratic* and the *democratic* idea, to be encouraged or provided in legislation. On the other hand, the introduction of the noblest principle into the minds of all classes and orders of men—a common love of the country, a common aim of the country's good, and a common hope of the country's glory—so that the heart of one freeman shall beat in sympathy with the heart of every other; and all together, with highest pride, rejoice that they are American citizens! Unity of civilization is indeed the aim of modern civilization. Rome could conquer provinces and states, but she could not bring them into uniformity of civilization. Her government, under Augustus, traced more strongly than ever the lines of social distinction; and those lines of social distinction were severely felt between her four classes, citizens, subjects, allies, and slaves. Right in the heart of the Roman Empire were her subjects and allies, who were little more than aliens to her institutions and the spirit of her laws.[1] And from this time also began the development of the principle and practice of administrative despotism, which restricted the activity of the individual, and of course crippled the energies of society. What could be expected from this but a decline of civili-

[1] Merivale, vol. iv, pp. 304–5.

zation and of the power of empire? So there was a decline. But what does our history show? It shows that the prevailing idea of our civilization has been the *democratic* idea. Almost all the efforts of our Government and of our people at social development, since the formation of the Constitution, have proceeded on the basis of the *democratic idea.* This idea has marched steadily onward. Republican is but another name for the idea. I mean, call it by what names we may, the grand idea of elevating the American people into the fulness of citizenship. The *aristocratic* idea has had no successful conflict with it. And I know of but one exception where that democratic idea has not entered on our march of social development; and that is the case of the Indians. It has been the distinguishing feature of our history, and the spirit of our internal national policy. And this idea is now marching with quicker step and fuller force to reduce the diverse elements of American society to uniformity of civil *status.* The accomplished victory of this idea over the whole land may be the means of solving the social problem now before us. Does this include the gift of the elective franchise to the black man of the South? I shall not argue this question on its merits; whether it be a right inherent in man, or whether society has the right to bestow or withhold it. Different theories prevail about it. But I will not argue it,

because the interpretation of the Constitution by those highest in authority over the country is held to be, that each State of the Union has the right to regulate the elective franchise for the population within its own borders. This question will be referred to each State; and one State may settle it in a manner different from another. But the agitation of the question, its most earnest discussion, will go on throughout the land. The two opposing theories will struggle together without ceasing. The advocates of universal suffrage in the North will never cease until they see its accomplishment. And what of the freedmen? Will they be content without the boon? As they progress in social development, and appreciate the liberty which they possess, and see and know and feel the power of ideas, will they be satisfied with the social privileges which they enjoy? or will they reach forth to claim this, the highest and noblest badge of citizenship? Every internal development of man seeks for outward expression. The felt power to obtain property will struggle for its acquisition; and the consciousness of mental power impels its possessor to exercise it upon his fellow.

These considerations do and will mingle with our hopes and fears upon this question.

And however unfit the freedmen may be at present, through ignorance and social degradation, to

exercise the right of voting, I doubt not, for a moment, that the end of discussion upon extending suffrage to the freedmen of the South, will be a victory to the democratic idea; and that, when ten or fifteen years or more have passed away, the freedman will obtain the fullest privilege of citizenship. We may not like that result; we may deplore it, and consider it no part of wisdom. But, most probably, neither you nor I will have power to prevent the result; for the end, I believe, will be universal suffrage. We may receive the position of the Chief Magistrate of the country upon this subject. In his message to this Congress he says: "But while I have no doubt that now, after the close of the war, it is not competent for the General Government to extend the elective franchise in the several States, it is equally clear that good faith requires the security of the freedmen in their liberty and their property, their right to labor, and their right to claim a just return of their labors. I cannot too strongly urge a dispassionate treatment of this subject, which should be carefully kept aloof from all party strife. We must equally avoid hasty assumptions of any natural impossibility for the two races to live side by side in a state of mutual benefit and good-will. The experiment involves us in no inconsistency. Let us then go on, and make that experiment in good faith, and not be too easily disheartened. The

country is in need of labor, and the freedmen are in need of employment, culture, and protection. While their right of voluntary migration and expatriation is not to be questioned, I would not advise their forced removal and colonization." Such language is worthy of a wise and patriotic President of a great Republic.

There is, then, to be no colonization of the freedmen. They are to live on their native soil. Their race is to be developed into a proper relation to the white race; and there will be *unity of American civilization*. A new song of thanksgiving will break forth from the lips of the millions of freedmen. Law will be instinct with justice and mercy. Citizens of a redeemed and united nation will rejoice for the glory of her future.

"Oh that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men."